



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL GETS 10 YEARS IN "PROJECT SAFE

NEIGHBORHOODS" FIREARMS CASE

U.S. District Court Judge Anne C. Conway today sentenced JAMES ARTHUR CLINTON, 26, to a term of imprisonment of 120 months in connection with his possession of a firearm on August 4, 2002. Clinton previously had entered a guilty plea to the offense of possession of a firearm by a prohibited person on October 28, 2002. Clinton also will be required to serve 5 years on supervised release, perform 150 hours of community service, and pay a \$100 special assessment.

According to the plea agreement, on August 4, 2002, Sanford Police Department Officers and a Special Agent of the Florida Division of Alcohol and Tobacco responded to the "Buzzard's Roost" bar in Seminole County, Florida. As the officers prepared to enter the establishment, they observed an argument at the front door of the bar between Clinton and another man. During the dispute, Clinton displayed a loaded .357 caliber revolver. When Clinton saw the officers, he ran through the establishment's parking lot in an attempt to escape. He subsequently surrendered after a short foot chase and dropped the firearm on the ground. Clinton has prior felony convictions in the State of Florida. As a previously convicted felon, he is prohibited from possessing a firearm under federal law.

The case represents the culmination of a cooperative effort between the United States Attorney's Office, the State Attorney's Office for Brevard/Seminole Counties, the Sanford Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The case was prosecuted as part of the Department of Justice program "Project Safe Neighborhoods," a nationwide gun violence reduction initiative aimed at reducing violent crime by locating and seizing unlawfully possessed guns and then swiftly prosecuting the offenders using both federal and state gun laws. United States Attorney Paul Perez is coordinating the cooperative effort in the Middle District of Florida with federal, state and local law enforcement officials as "Project Safe Neighborhoods - Operation HALT the Violence!"

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert E. Bodnar, Jr.